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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, January 6, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "UP-TO-DATE AIDS IN LAUNDRY WORK." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Publication available, Farmers' Bulletin 1497-F.

--ooOoo--

Homemakers, I have some good news for you this morning. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has just issued a revision of its bulletin on home laundering. There's so much that's new and up-to-date in this bulletin, I believe you'll want to send to the Department for a copy. The number and title are the same as before --Farmers' Bulletin 1497-F, "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering." The authors are Ruth O'Brien, senior textile chemist, and Helen S. Holbrook, household equipment specialist, of the Bureau of Home Economics.

With all the extension of electric power lines that's going on the country over, it's natural to look first to see what the bulletin has to say about selecting the various kinds of modern laundry equipment. You'll find them all there,- electric washing machines, ironing machines, irons, power wringers, and extractors. Perhaps you call the last spinner-driers. Today I'll just run through the bulletin with you and tell you what I find in it that's new.

"Old ways have given way to new in laundering as in other lines of household activity," the bulletin points out. "Some housewives have turned the job over entirely to cooperative or commercial laundries. Many others still do it all at home. In between is a large group that sends out heavy pieces and does the remainder at home."

I assume that many of my listeners are in the last two groups. What you are most likely interested in is how to make this heaviest household job easier and less fatiguing.

You probably have a laundry center of some sort in your house. Maybe just a corner in the kitchen for the tubs and the ironing board. For those who want a separate laundry room the bulletin shows a floor plan.

In many farmhouses the laundry is outside the main part of the house, either out on the back porch, during the warm months, or in an addition which may also be used for other purposes, such as canning and preparing products for market.

If there is water and light in the basement, that's often the best place for the laundry room. In the floor plan given in the bulletin I was interested to see the tub right out in the middle of the room, with the washing machine next to it, and the sorting table, ironing board, ironing machine, and laundry stove placed along the walls.

One reason for this is better light. When tubs are next to the cellar wall under a window, which is generally high up and small, the lighting is not so good. The light strikes over and back of the tubs. If the tub can't be set out in the middle of the room it is better lighted if set at right angles to the windows with the light directed on the work from the side. Of course there should be an artificial light over the tubs and ironing equipment, to use on dark days or for evening work if that is necessary.

Next week I'll talk about washing machines in detail. The point that struck me especially was that manufacturers are making washing machines of lighter weight materials. Lightness of weight is a factor in the shipping cost as well as in moving the machine on the floor. Nevertheless the framework of the machine must be sturdy, well welded and braced. The material that goes into its construction and the way the machine is put together govern its durability and safety. The new machines have many features that aid quiet operation and eliminate vibration,- rubber-mounted parts especially. You'll hear more about this in my next chat on laundry equipment. The moderate-priced machines have a single tub.

"Balloon" type rollers are increasing in favor on power wringers. The softer surface prevents injury to buttons and buckles, produces less heavy creases in the fabric and wears on it less, and is just as effective in wringing out the water. Spinner driers or extractors are found only on the more expensive electric washing machines.

The height of the wash-tubs is something to consider, especially in homes where the washing is done by hand. It should only be necessary to bend from the hips, never from the shoulders. A small platform helps to adjust the position of workers of different height.

Here's a suggestion about moving the heavy clothes basket around: Use a small wheeled table, a child's wagon, or baby-buggy chassis. Any of these will keep the basket off the ground and at an easy lifting level.

Automatic temperature control is recommended for electric irons as well as ironers, to reduce the fire hazard and produce more satisfactory work. Some of the very new irons have their cords attached at the side instead of at the end to keep it out of the way of the work.

There is marked emphasis on safety features for all pieces of electrical laundry equipment. These include proper insulation to prevent shock, safety devices on the wringer to save the fingers from being drawn through, and a safety release or stopping device on the ironing machine.

Not entirely new, but equally useful to every woman who has laundry work to be done at home, are the paragraphs on softening and improving water, on soap, powders, bluings, starches, and the methods of laundering various textiles. White and colored cottons and linens, woolens, silks, and synthetics all require slightly different handling.

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